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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for increasing intrinsic reading motivation. The targeted population consisted of lower primary students in a growing middle class community, located in northern Illinois. The problems of aliterate students were documented through teacher observations and student surveys. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students lack access to books; view too much television; and are not read aloud to at home. The ever-growing diversity of the community increased a reading/language barrier in the classroom. This may have complicated the teacher's ability to individualize instruction. Major categories of intervention were arrived at after a review of solution strategies. A 1983 national commission on reading found conclusively that reading aloud in the home was the important activity in determining eventual success reading. Numerous studies since then support these findings. In 1995 J. Trelease reported that one of the major purposes of reading aloud is to motivate children to read independently for pleasure. These findings, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in 2 major categories of intervention: a program to increase book awareness and exposure to reading materials and reading models both at home and at school. Post-intervention data indicated an increase in the students' intrinsic reading motivation. (Contains 30 references and 21 appendixes, including surveys, and sample reading buddy activities.) (Author/TB)

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ED 399 506

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INCREASING STUDENT INTRINSIC READING MOTIVATION

by

*Mary Lippe

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Abstract

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Site: Rockford V

Date: April 14, 1996

Title: Increasing Student Reading Motivation

This report describes a program for increasing intrinsic reading motivation. The targeted population consisted of lower primary students in a growing middle class community, located in northern Illinois. The problems of aliterate students were documented through teacher observations and student surveys.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students lack access to books, view too much television and are not read aloud to at home. The ever growing diversity of the community increased a reading/language barrier in the classroom. This may have complicated the teacher's ability to individualize instruction.

A review of solution strategies by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in two major categories of intervention: a program to increase book awareness and exposure to reading materials and reading models both at home and at school.

Post intervention data indicated an increase in the students' intrinsic reading motivation.

Chapter I

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of Problem

The lower primary students at the targeted elementary schools lack intrinsic reading motivation as evidenced by teacher observations and parent and student surveys.

Immediate Problem Context

School A

Targeted school A was built in 1956. It served as a combined junior high school and an elementary school for ten years. In 1966, eight elementary classrooms were added to the building. A year later, in 1967, the junior high moved to a new facility. The targeted school was then divided into two elementary school organizations. In 1969 the school became one elementary school with 1000 plus students. It remains the same to the present day.

There are a total of 1,111 elementary students currently enrolled in the school. The students range from preschool through sixth grade. This school is one of six elementary schools in the community. The student population consists of

83.2 percent White, 14 percent Hispanic, one and four-tenths percent Black and nine tenths of one percent Asian students. Data concerning family socio-economic status indicate 22.5 percent are in the low income bracket. The school has an attendance rate of 94.5 percent with 11 chronic truancy problems. The student mobility rate is 12.7 percent (School Report Card, 1994).

The staff at the targeted school consists of one principal, one assistant principal, 36 classroom teachers, five specialized teachers and eight teacher assistants. The support staff includes two speech and language clinicians, three Chapter I teachers, one instructor of the gifted, two Transitional Program Instructors (TPI), three Learning Disability Resource teachers, one teacher of the hearing impaired, one teacher of the visually impaired, one social worker, and one full-time nurse. The school has five self-contained special education classrooms, one behavior disorder classroom, one pre-kindergarten at-risk classroom, and one transition room instructing students between kindergarten and first grade. The administrative and teaching staff averages 18 years of teaching experience. A little over half, 55 percent, of the teaching staff have a masters degree, nine percent are currently enrolled in a masters program, and 36 percent have a bachelors degree. The teacher-pupil ratio is 23.7 to one in kindergarten through second grade and 29.5 to one in third through sixth grade (School Report Card, 1994).

The targeted school is located in a residential area. Some of the students are form the neighboring area, the remainder are bussed in from the surrounding subdivisions. Due to high enrollments in some of the other six elementary schools, the targeted school services the overflow. Pre-kindergarten through sixth grade students are in mixed ability self-contained classrooms. The students are heterogeneously grouped. The district uses the Silver Burdett Ginn Reading Series and the Addison Wesley Math Series for kindergarten through sixth grade.

School B

Targeted school B was built in 1953, at which time it housed fourth and fifth grade. In the fall of 1974, third grade was added to the building. In 1994, the targeted school opened a new addition consisting of eight regular classrooms, one music room, three smaller rooms to be used for special education classes, a large multi-purpose room, a learning center/computer lab, and an updated cafeteria. Currently, the targeted school houses nine first grade classes, two second grade classes, four third grade classes, six fourth grade classes and two special education classes.

There are a total of 515 elementary students currently enrolled in the targeted school. The students are in first through fourth grade classes. The targeted school is one of three elementary school facilities in the community. The student population consist of 84.7 percent White, 14.3 percent

Hispanic, and one percent Black. Data concerning family socio-economic status indicate 26.9 percent are in the low income bracket. The targeted school has an attendance rate of 96.2 percent with eight chronic truancy problems. The student mobility rate is 12.3 percent (School Report Card, 1994).

The targeted school's academic team consists of one principal, 21 classroom teachers, and two specialized teachers. Support staff, in the building, includes one speech and language clinician, two Chapter I teachers, two Learning Disability Resource teachers, three bilingual teachers, two teacher assistants, one bilingual aide, one social worker and one part-time nurse. The school has two self-contained special education classrooms, nine first grade classrooms, two second grade classrooms, four third grade classrooms, and six fourth grade classrooms. The administrative and teaching staff is 100 percent White. Years of teaching experience among the staff averages 15.6 years. Thirty percent of the teaching staff have a masters degree and 70 percent have a bachelors degree. The teacher-pupil ratio is 29.5 to one (School Report Card, 1994).

The targeted school is located in a residential area. Some of the students are from the neighboring area, with the remainder being bussed in from the surrounding rural area. Students are in mixed ability self-contained classrooms. The school offers a curriculum where the students are heterogeneously grouped. Time devoted to the teaching of core subjects, for a five day week, is as follows: reading and

language arts, 11 hours; math, five hours; science, two hours; social science, two and one half hours. The district uses the Silver Burdett Ginn Reading Series and The Addison Wesley Math Series for first through sixth grade.

The Surrounding Community

School A

School district A serves one city and the majority of one county with a combined population of 35, 341. The median family income is $38,586. The racial composition of the county is 95 percent White, six-tenths of one percent Black and four and four-tenths of one percent other races. The Hispanic population of this community is calculated at six and four-tenths percent regardless of the racial mix.

The community is experiencing considerable residential growth. Forty-five percent of the community's population increase comes from a large metropolitan area and its suburban communities, 21 percent from communities within the state, 16 percent from other states, and 15 percent from an urban community within 15 miles (Community Profile).

The community has a wide range of educational levels among the adult population. Twenty-four and five-tenths percent have not completed high school, 40.1 percent are high school graduates and 35.3 percent have had higher education (Community Profile).

Manufacturing employs 59 percent of the working population. Retail trade follows at 16 percent and service

jobs at 13 percent. Almost half, 48 8 percent, of the working population is employed in the county itself. A total of 49.4 percent of the residents travel to the surrounding metropolitan areas of employment. Ten and two-tenths percent of the families have no members working (Community Profile).

The school district is a community unit district. There is one high school, one junior high, six elementary schools and one special education facility. Special education services are offered to the mentally impaired, the hearing impaired, the visually impaired, the physically impaired, the speech and language impaired and the learning disabled children. Student population of the school district was 5,223 in 1994. Due to the district's expanding population a new elementary school is scheduled to open in early January 1996. One elementary school, after remodeling, will double its present capacity.

The central office administration consists of an appointed superintendent, assistant superintendent of curriculum and a director of special education. The board of education consists of seven members of this community elected to four-year terms. The responsibilities of the board are to deal with budget, curriculum, staffing, facilities and extreme discipline incidents.

Surrounding Community B

The school district serves one city with a population of 6,575 and several smaller, rural communities. The city has the largest Hispanic population of the county. The city is

located in the center of four very large metropolitan areas. The railroad was the first major form of transportation that effected the city. businesses, both big and small, take advantage of the transportation available to and from the city. The rich and productive farmlands of the rural communities supports a variety of products (Community Profile, 1992).

The median family income is $29,000 which is $6,000 below that of the county. The infant mortality rate exceeds that of the inner-city neighborhoods of large metropolitan areas. The poverty rate tops out at 24 percent in some of the schools. The high school graduation rate is the lowest in the county (Northwest Herald, 1995).

The school district is a community unit district. It is comprised of five buildings that serve over 2000 students. There are over 200 certified and non-certified staff members. the students and staff are housed in one high school, one junior high, two elementary and one pre-kindergarten/kindergarten schools. Special education services are available to students with mental, physical, and sensory disabilities. Related services available to children include speech, occupational and physical therapy, health services, psychological and social work support. Student population of the school district was 2,079 in 1994 (Community Profile, 1992).

The central office administration consists of an appointed superintendent and the building principals who are also in charge of curriculum and special education. The board of education consists of seven members of the community

elected to four-year terms. The board of education has the responsibility to deal with situations pertaining to the budget, curriculum, staffing, and facilities.

Regional and National Context of Problem

The lack of reading skills or readiness to read has generated increased concern within recent years. This higher level of concern is reflected by President Bush's announcement of six goals for all of the nation's schools. Their purpose was to change the standards of education so that the United States would no longer be a nation at-risk but rather a leader in educational excellence (Flood & Lapp, 1993). Foremost was the objective that by the year 2000, every child in America would start school "ready to learn" (Boyer, 1993).

There is no skill more basic to success than the ability to read (Taylor, Short, Frye, Shearer, 1992). Reading is the foundation for children's success in school as well as throughout life. It is not enough to just teach children how to read. Educators need to instill the value of reading for both enjoyment and for information.

Koskinen (1994), reporting on research by Palmer, Codling and Gambrell states that motivating children to read is am important factor in reducing the risk of reading failure. All too often in school the focus on reading is not just for pleasure. The main focus in most classrooms seems to be the practicing of skills by completing endless workbook pages and worksheets. These types of activities can often be boring,

tedious and meaningless for the young reader. This monotonous seatwork can often instill a dislike for reading. Therefore, the children do not usually associate reading with enjoyment (Early Childhood and Literacy Development Committee of the International Reading Association, 1986). These unpleasant reading experiences have produced aliterate children and adults nationwide. This term applies to the growing number of children and adults that possess the ability to read but choose not to read (Davis, 1994).

Schwartz citing Trelease (1995) stated that educators have concentrated so much on teaching children how to read, that they have neglected to teach children to want to read. A nation of lifetime readers should be the goal of educators. Presently we are just a nation of schooltime readers.

Children still remain our most precious resource. We as a nation, need to commit ourselves to helping the future generation be prepared for schooling and life (Boyer, 1993).

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Evidence

In order to document the degree of intrinsic reading motivation, a student survey and student observations were initiated during the first two weeks of school.

Thirty students in the class were involved in this data collecting process the first two weeks of school. A student survey was developed by the researcher to aid in documenting the problem. (Appendix A) A summary of the survey results is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Reading Interest Survey
August 28, 1995 through September 8, 1995
Percentage of Students Responding.

Survey Interest Areas	Yes	No
Own a library card	26	74
Receive books as gifts	74	26
Bookshelf in bedroom	65	35
Read with someone	82	18

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Like to look at books	42	35	23
Reading is easy	14	45	41

Of the 30 students surveyed, three-fourths of the students do not have their own library card. The low number of library card holders could be attributed to the fact that a majority of the students receive books as gifts.

To further explore student interest, two statements that measured the students' feelings about reading were included. The results of the first statement indicated that over fifty percent of the children do not enjoy looking at books. Results for the second statement reported that a very large majority of students feel reading is difficult. This perceived difficulty may negatively effect reading motivation.

In addition, the researchers conducted a student observation. The students were given twenty minutes of free time in an interest area of their choice. The four areas consisted of puzzles, legos, books and paper and crayons. The students were not allowed to change areas. A form was developed by the researchers to aid in the recording process during the observation time. (Appendix B) A summary of the observation results is depicted in Figure 1.

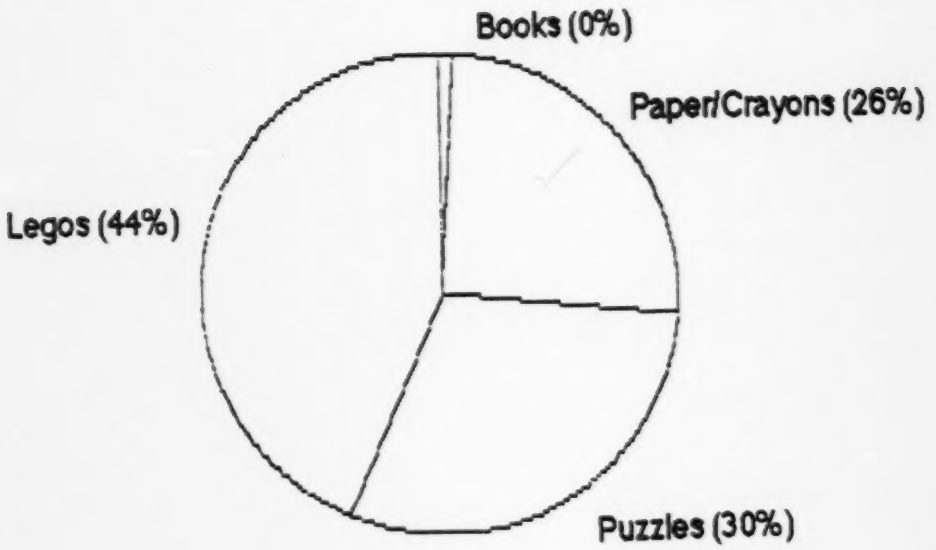


Figure 1
Reading Interest Observation
August 28, 1995 through September 8, 1995
Percentages of Students Responding

The data clearly indicate the students' lack of interest in reading. Three-fourths of the students chose an activity working with manipulatives. It appears that paper and crayons and books are perceived as school related and legos and puzzles are thought of as play oriented. It should be noted that friendships may influence the activity choice of some students. This was observed by the researcher when one student headed to the books and changed direction after noticing all children were at other activities.

Probable Causes

In analyzing the data, one possible cause for low intrinsic reading motivation may very well be the limited access students have to books. This could be due to: the low number of students with library cards, minimal reading material in the home, and poorly designed classroom libraries. Population growth and frequent relocating families are factors which could influence reading motivation in children. Also related is the increasing number of non-English speaking children entering the school system. Reading is not often modeled at home nor is much time spent by parents reading aloud to their children. Possible causes for this may be the increase in the number of single parent families, both parents in the work force, and the amount of time viewing television.

Literature suggests several underlying causes for low intrinsic reading motivation. Sherman (1991) states that the typical American mother spends less than an hour and a half a day on child care and fathers devote less than half an hour. More time is spent working, preparing and eating meals, housekeeping and watching television. Two-thirds of school-age children have working mothers.

According to Deegan (1995) the presence of distressing social conditions such as poverty, addiction and homelessness can negatively influence a child's motivation to pleasure read. Gottschall (1995) and Mavrogenes (1990) are both of the opinion that low-income families tend to be inadequate at fostering and encouraging pleasure reading. These families

have had few opportunities to experience and enjoy books. Many parents do not have the time or the desire to leave home for pleasure trips to the library.

The children in America's schools come from extremely diverse families. Many of these families cannot speak or understand English. This language barrier makes it difficult for the student to be motivated in reading (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Parents are often uncertain as to how to help their children. Many are simply not prepared to be parents. Other parents may have unpleasant school memories that make them reluctant to seek advice from the teacher (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Trelease (1995) strongly emphasizes that time is not the problem in encouraging reading. It is the dedicated parents that make the difference.

In summary the following probable causes were noted:

1.) Parents spend minimal time on child care.

2.) Social conditions such as poverty, addiction and homelessness can negatively influence a child's desire to read.

3.) Diverse cultural backgrounds are barriers to motivating reading.

4.) Parents are often insecure about the ways to help their children in school.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

Analysis of problem evidence data suggested that lower primary students lacked intrinsic reading motivation. The literature search for solution strategies found that reading aloud, independent reading and parental involvement increased an interest in printed material. Additional literature has noted the importance of modeling reading and the value of access to books both at home and in school.

In 1983 a national commission on reading was formed to investigate the decline in voluntary reading and determine possible solutions. The members selected for the Commission consisted of nationally recognized experts on child, language and academic development. In 1985, the Commission published its report entitled Becoming A Nation of Readers. Two major basic findings stated that:

* The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985, p.23).

> The Commission found conclusive evidence to support the use of reading aloud not only in the home but also in the classroom. It is a practice that should continue throughout the grades (Anderson et al., 1985, p.51).

In simple terms the experts were saying that reading aloud was more beneficial than numerous worksheets, workbooks and assessments.

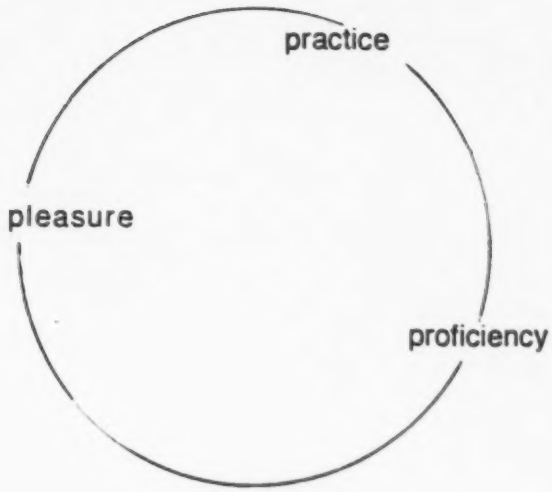
Trelease (1995) agrees with the Commission's findings on reading aloud. Trelease feels that the single most important factor in raising a reader is to read aloud. Reading aloud to children not only improves negative attitudes about reading, it also stimulates children's imagination, stretches children's attention spans and improves reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Reading aloud to children by parents and teachers often helps create background knowledge. This background knowledge is what children use to make sense of what they see, hear and read. If background knowledge is limited, then new material will not be as easily understood. Reading aloud also provides a positive reading role model for the children. Children often imitate much of what they see and hear (Trelease, 1995).

Teale and Martinez (1988) agree with the importance of reading aloud to children. Research has indicated a correlation between reading aloud to children and an increase in reading comprehension and oral language abilities. Interaction with

books is a key element for fostering reading development in young children. Therefore, storybook reading is an excellent way to motivate and encourage children to read. Learning to read can often be a tedious and frustrating experience for children. The best advertisement for learning to read is by reading aloud (Schwartz, 1995).

In 1995, Trelease reported one of the major purposes of reading aloud is to motivate children to read independently for pleasure. The academic term for such reading is called Sustained Silent Reading or SSR. It is based on the simple principle that reading is a skill. As with any skill, the more one uses it, the better one becomes at it. The opposite also applies in that the less a skill is used, the more difficult it is. Through the implementation of SSR the student is provided with a new outlook on reading-as a form of pleasure. The positive role modeling exhibited by the teacher during SSR reinforces that reading can be pleasurable. Teachers that set aside time for independent reading send the message that reading is important (Avery & Avery, 1994).

According to Cullinan (1992), several advantages are obtained by children through the practice of independent reading. Among these advantages are stirring the imagination, developing vocabulary and expanding a sense of wonder. One highly beneficial outcome is the establishment of a lifelong reader. A success cycle is developed as a result of this independent reading.



Success Cycle

This Success Cycle is based on the idea that practice leads to proficiency which leads to pleasure thereby increasing the desire to read. The basic meaning behind the Success Cycle is simply practice makes perfect. Cullinan's Success Cycle mirrors Trelease's statement that the more you use a skill the better you become.

A key element in developing a motivation to read and a love for books is the accessibility that children have to books. A well designed classroom library entices children to read when given the opportunity. A well designed classroom library contains a number of physical features. The library area should be attractive and easily visible. It should be apart from the rest of the classroom and provide a quiet private reading place. Seating in the form of carpeting, chairs and beanbags need to be readily available. A library without seating is less likely to be utilized by the children. An area that comfortably

accommodates five to six children is ideal. An average of five to six books per child and books of a variety of genres and reading levels is also a priority. If possible, the books need to be shelved displaying the attractive covers and with the spines out to minimize space. It is also helpful if the books are organized into categories. This can be accomplished by theme, author, content, topic, genre or reading level (Fractor, Woodruff, Martinez & Teale, 1993).

Morrow (1995) agreed with the physical features of a good library. In addition to books, a reminder to include appropriate magazines and nonfiction materials was stated. Other materials often added are stuffed animals, cassette players with headsets and pillows.

Research positively links the importance of classroom libraries to children's reading development. In classroom library centers, children interact more with books, demonstrate more positive attitudes about reading, select reading as a leisure activity, spend more time reading and exhibit increased reading achievement (Fractor et al., 1993).

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act focuses on promoting parent involvement which is felt to be an important aspect of successful schools. Positive parental involvement helps children complete more homework, have better attendance, develop positive attitudes and achieve higher grades. Parents can specifically affect three areas of their children's schooling. Parents have authority over student absenteeism, the variety of reading materials in the home and

excessive television watching. This means that parents can improve their children's achievement by making sure their children attend school, encourage reading at home and monitor excessive television viewing (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

In 1994, Rasinski stated there is a strong relationship between the degree of parental involvement and children's success in reading. Children who are read to regularly at home show a significant gain in reading.

Children's learning in school begins with the parents reading aloud at home. Research supports a connection between shared reading, reading aloud, promoting positive attitudes toward reading, access to a variety of printed materials and children's reading success (Morrow, Paratore, Gaber, Harrison & Tracey, 1993). According to Dwyer and Isbell (1990), parents that read aloud to their children introduce them to good literature, encourage language development and expose them to the wonders of books.

Forming a link between the family and the school is the foundation for building children's reading success in school (Helm, 1994). This link most commonly focuses on parental involvement. Older siblings and upper grade students are often overlooked as positive reading motivators. Both age groups benefit from this reading experience. The older students become positive role models, develop responsible relationships with young children, and learn more about story elements and authors. The younger children feel important and enjoy

interaction with the older student (Baghban, 1995). Labbo and Teale (1990) also recognize the advantages of cross-age interaction. It was reported that attitudes toward school and learning increase positively for all children in cross-age interaction.

In summary, reading aloud, establishing a classroom library, and involving parents are practices that the research literature suggests will increase childrens' motivation to read.

Project Outcomes and Solution Components

The terminal objective of this problem intervention is related to the problem evidence data presented in Chapter 2. The data indicated that students lack motivation to read. Therefore:

> As a result of parent involvement and book awareness activities, during the period of September 1995 to January 1996, the lower primary students at the targeted elementary schools will increase reading motivation as measured by teacher observation and student surveys.

In order to accomplish an increase in reading motivation, the following processes are necessary:

1. Construct a classroom library.
2. Create materials for take-home book bags.
3. Establish a daily read aloud time.
4. Establish a cross-age reading program.
5. Establish a sustained reading program.

Action Plan for the Intervention

The following plan is designed to implement two major solution components: an increase in book awareness and exposure to reading materials and reading models both at home and at school. Increased reading motivation will be accomplished by read aloud time, sustained silent reading time, a well designed classroom library, cross-age reading interaction and parental involvement. The improvement desired as a result of the implementation plan is an increase in voluntary reading both at home and in school.

Surveys and the teacher observation checklist were constructed in the summer of 1995 and will be used to collect baseline data during the first few weeks of school. The student survey will be administered to the students in the two targeted elementary schools. The student survey and the teacher observation will be administered in the classroom. The parent survey will be sent home during the first week of school. (Appendix C) In addition to collecting baseline data, the surveys and the observations will elicit information to establish probable cause and possible solution strategies.

A daily read aloud program will be initiated during the first week of school. A twenty minute period will be scheduled into the daily program whereby the students will gather around the teacher while selected classroom library books are read.

A once a week, ten to fifteen minute period will be scheduled for sustained silent reading. This time will be called 'reading in your head' time. The two targeted classes will randomly be placed into cooperative base groups of three students. Color coded containers with eight to ten teacher selected books will be utilized during this reading time. A corresponding color coded clothespin will be clipped to a displayed list of the base groups. At the designated reading time, the students will get into their base groups around the room. The student designated as the materials manager in each group will retrieve the container displaying the same color as the clothespin attached to their base group listing. Once all groups are ready 'reading in your head' time will begin. During this time the teacher is reading also.

During this ten to fifteen minute period, the students in their base groups will sit around the container of books and quietly select and exchange books as they silently read. There will be no movement around the room or talking to others during this time. At the end of the time period a five minute sharing time is included. During this sharing time each group will discuss their thoughts and feelings about the books just read. When time is called, the materials manager will return the container of reading material to the designated storage area and all the students will return to their seats.

During the first month of school, a well-designed classroom library will be organized. A well lit area of the classroom large enough for five to six children will be

selected. Books and magazines of all levels and genres will be gathered. At least four books per child need to be available in the library. This area will be equipped with carpeting, pillows, stuffed animals, posters and a possible bean bag chair, if space allows. The books will be color coded by subjects and shelved both open-faced and with the spine showing. A chart will be posted to indicate the meaning of the color codes.

During the first two weeks of school a cross-age reading program will be established. An upper elementary class will be paired with each researcher's class. A meeting with that staff member will be held to select the best day and time for this weekly fifteen to twenty minute reading buddy time. Role modeling of read aloud and questioning techniques will be demonstrated to the older readers by the researcher. The researcher will first meet with the older readers to discuss the format and purpose of the cross-age reading program. The researcher will read aloud a big book to both classes involved in the reading buddy program. A T-chart on what reading together looks like and sounds like will be completed at this time. The students will be paired randomly by lettered cards. The researcher will select twenty to thirty books for the older readers to select from which will be available for viewing and practice in the upper grade classroom. As the older readers enter the targeted classrooms they will state their letter aloud and the younger child with the matching letter will join them. During the shared reading period one book will be read

and possibly discussed. The researchers' students will have a pocket folder containing name tags for each buddy, a possible list of story guide questions (Appendix D) and a reading record chart. (Appendix E) New reading buddies will randomly be assigned in the same manner after Christmas in January. At the conclusion of the reading period the younger students will thank their reading buddy and the older reader will return to their classroom. They will return the book to the assigned container and select a new book to practice for the next week. The container of books will be changed monthly.

When birthdays are celebrated in the classroom, the birthday student selects a book to keep from the container of Birthday Books. They also get to be the reader for read aloud time. As the reader, they hold the book and turn the pages as the class listens to the corresponding tape.

To encourage parental involvement and reading aloud at home, take-home book bags will be developed. These bags will either be purchased or hand-made. Bags (12 1/2" x 17 1/2") each containing a book and a pocket folder with story questions (Appendix F), an extension activity, and an evaluation form pertaining to the story will be included in the book bag. Samples of extension activities can be found in Appendices G-I. Also in the pocket folder is a list of simple directions (Appendix J) to guide the parent through the use of the book bag. Each bag will contain a different book to be read aloud by the parent and an activity. The enclosed evaluation form (Appendix K) pertaining to each book will be completed by

the parent and will be returned in the book bag with the book and the folder. Half the class will take home the book bags the first week. The other half will take the bags home the following week. Names will randomly be drawn for the first group of children to take the book bags home. Book bags will be sent home on Tuesday and will be due back on Thursday. A note will be sent home followed by a phone call for unreturned book bags. A checklist (Appendix L) to identify the children and their corresponding book bag will be used to distribute and collect the book bags. The bags will be labeled with a number making the record keeping process easy. As the book bags are returned, completed activities and evaluation forms will be removed and any consumable supplies will be replaced.

Methods of Assessment

The effect of this intervention will be determined by a student survey and a teacher observation. In addition, the evaluation forms in each take-home book bag will be used as a part of the assessment process.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase reading motivation of the lower primary students at the targeted elementary schools. The implementation of daily read aloud time, sustained silent reading time, a well-designed classroom library, cross-age reading interaction, and parental involvement were selected to affect the desired change.

During the first week of school, the student survey (Appendix A) and teacher observation checklists (Appendix B) were administered. The parent survey was sent home at the conclusion of the week. (Appendix C)

A daily read aloud program was initiated during the first week of school. A twenty minute period was scheduled into the daily program. After the first two weeks, the time was extended to thirty minutes for the duration of the intervention period. The read aloud time was lengthened because the students requested the reading of more books and were able to attend longer than the researcher anticipated.

Each Friday, a ten to fifteen minute period was set aside for sustained silent reading. This 'read in your head' time was organized by base groups. A more detailed description of this activity is explained in Chapter 3.

During the month of September, a well-designed classroom library was established. The library was in a well lit area of the classroom and accommodated five to six children comfortably. Books and magazines of all levels and genres were available. The library was equipped with carpeting, pillows, stuffed animals and posters. The books were shelved both open-faced and with the spine showing. A student-made chart was posted to indicate the meaning of the color codes. The only time the classroom library was closed was during direct instruction.

During the second week of school, a cross-age reading program involving a fourth grade class and the targeted students was established. The fourth grade teacher and researcher met to set up the reading buddies and a weekly schedule for the activity. A weekly twenty minute period was agreed upon. The following week the researcher conducted a training session for the fourth graders. Guidelines as to book selection, materials needed and the expectations of the older students were explained. Questions from the students were also answered.

At the first session, the researcher read a big book, Goldilocks and the Three Bears by David Theall to both the targeted students and the fourth graders. Together the group

created a T-chart on reading together which was posted in the room.

The targeted students found their fourth grade reading buddy by matching cards depicting upper and lower case letters. The students made name tags and got acquainted. Due to the larger fourth grade class size the researcher made a few buddy groups consist of three students.

During the remaining sessions of the intervention period, the fourth graders read to the targeted students for twenty minutes one day each week. After reading and discussing the book, the students made pictures related to the story.

Beginning the fifth week of the implementation period, the researcher provided specific activities that would encourage conversation between the reading buddies. Examples included drawing their favorite foods, their families, career choices and shared interests. These activities were kept in the pocket folder in the targeted students' classroom.

During the third week of January, new reading buddies were randomly selected. These new reading buddies continued for the remainder of the school year. The activities now concentrated on story comprehension. Examples included drawing the characters, sequencing the story and revising the story ending.

As birthdays were celebrated in the classroom, the birthday student selected a book to keep from the container of Birthday Books. They also were the reader for read aloud time.

As the reader, they held the book and turned the pages as the class listened to the corresponding tape.

Finally to encourage parental involvement and reading aloud at home, take-home book bags were constructed. The book bags each contained a book and a pocket folder with guided questions (Appendix F), an extension activity (Appendix G-I) and an evaluation form pertaining to the story. (Appendix K) Also the pocket folder included a list of simple directions guiding the parents through the use of the book bag. (Appendix J) Half the class took home the book bags the first week. The other half took home the bags the following week. The take-home book bag intervention activity was continued until all targeted students had the opportunity to take home all of the twelve different book bags.

The take-home book bag activity was discontinued during the month of December due to the many outside activities for the Christmas season. The activity resumed during the second week of January.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

During the last two weeks of the intervention period, evaluations were administered to the targeted students, the parents and fourth graders to assess the effect of the implementation plan. The student observation was re-administered to assess the effect of the implementation in regard to an increase or decrease in the students' interest in reading and books.

The student observation conducted at the end of the implementation period was repeated under the same conditions as the student observation in September. (Appendix B) The students were given twenty minutes of free time in an area of their choice. The four areas again consisted of puzzles, books, legos and paper and crayons. A summary of the observation results is depicted in Figure 2.

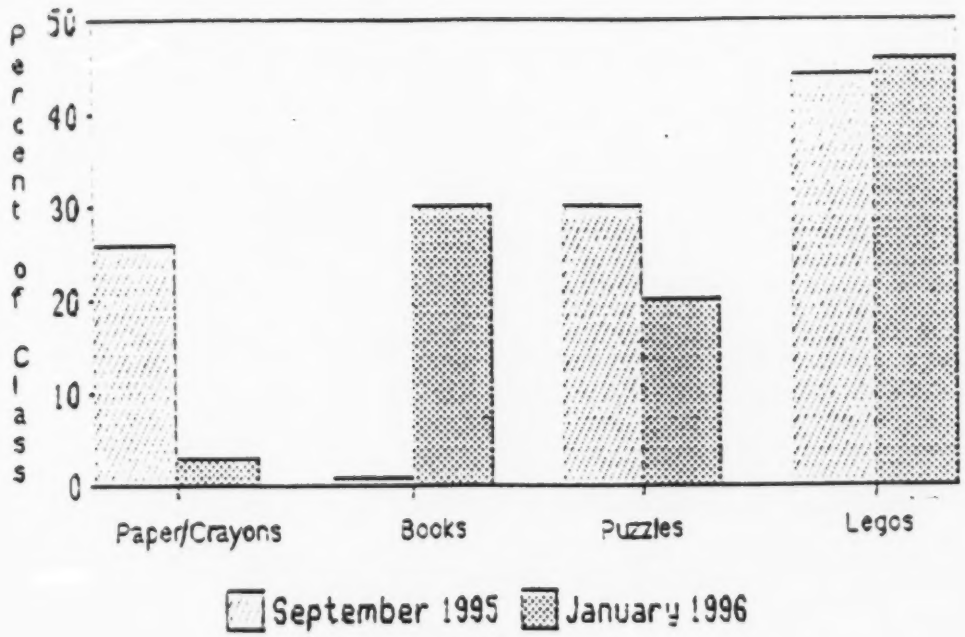


Figure 2
Reading Interest Observation
September 1995-January 1996
Percentages of Students Responding

The data clearly indicates an increase in the students' interest in reading books. Three-fourths of the students again chose an activity working with manipulatives. The most

noticeable change was in the books and paper and crayon areas. These two areas were basically reversed. In September there was no interest in the book area and a fourth of the students chose the paper and crayons. After the components of the implementation plan were completed, one fourth of the students chose the book area with no interest in the paper and crayons.

The targeted students were given a survey (Appendix M) to re-evaluate the students' feelings about reading. A summary of the survey results are compared in Table 2.

Table 2
Reading Interest Survey
September 1995-January 1996
Percentage of Students Responding

	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
Survey Areas	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.
Like to look at books	43	46	35	34	22	20
Reading is easy	14	46	45	31	41	23

When analyzing the data from the first statement, no change can be noted upon the completion of the intervention period. Results for the second statement depicts a noticeable difference regarding the difficulty of reading. Thirty-two percent of the targeted students now feel that reading is easy. Although some of the targeted students students still feel

reading is difficult, there was an eighteen percent decrease in the number since September when the intervention began.

A simple survey was administered on the birthday celebration activity. (Appendix N) One hundred percent of the targeted students liked choosing a signed by the teacher book to keep. Eighty-six percent of the students liked being the reader with the book and corresponding tape. Ninety percent of the targeted students, when asked, responded positively to participating again.

Parents were given an opportunity to respond to a survey regarding the use of the take-home book bags (Appendix O) at the end of the intervention period. Of the 30 targeted students, 28 participated in the program. Of the 30 parents asked to fill out the survey, 28 responded. Ninety-six percent of the parents felt their child enjoyed the take-home book bags. Seventy-five percent of the parents felt their child developed more interest in looking at books after the activity. Over fifty percent of the students requested books from the book orders more often. This data would seem to indicate that the take home book bags did help to increase an intrinsic motivation for books and reading. Many comments from parents about the book bags were included such as: "Your book bags are a fun activity to do together." "We enjoyed it." "Edward enjoyed some new books." " The picture they draw at the end really gets them to use their imagination." "Keep using them, the children are definitely gaining through them."

The targeted students and the fourth graders were given an opportunity to evaluate the cross-age reading buddy program. (Appendix P-Q) Thirty targeted students and 30 fourth graders evaluated the program. The results of the affirmative responses for each group are represented in Table 3.

Table 3
Cross-age Reading Program
September 1995-January 1996
Percentage of Affirmative Responses

Question	Targeted Students Responses	Fourth Grade Responses
Enjoy reading together	93%	83%
Like drawing activities	93%	73%
Continue the program	90%	93%

Data from the table indicates eighty-eight percent of both groups enjoy the reading time spent together. Eighty-three percent liked the drawing activities that were completed after reading the book selection. Ninety-two percent of the total group want to continue this program.

The fourth grade teacher, whose students were involved in the cross-age reading program was interviewed. The teacher felt the fourth graders derived just as much, if not more, benefit from the program as the targeted students. The students developed meaningful relationships with one another

and valued the time together. The older students had their own self-worth validated and their confidence in their personal reading effort was greatly increased.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on the student observation, the targeted students show a marked increased interest in books since September. The legos were a definite attraction, especially to the boys. Upon further consideration, pattern blocks or unifix cubes which the students have had free access to may elicit more reliable data. By using the materials in the book bags that were sent home, parents had an active role in helping their child acquire an enjoyment for books.

The in-class activities, such as the classroom library, birthday books, read aloud time and 'reading in your head' time increased the students awareness of books of all genres. The targeted students brought in more books from home to be read aloud, checked out more books from the classroom library and looked forward to selecting their birthday book. These activities also increased an awareness of authors which was noticeable during library check-out time. Many students wanted to know where to find certain books.

The cross-age reading program provided for interaction of two age groups with both benefitting. The time on task and interaction of the groups were evident by the students being

self-directed to complete the activities without teacher involvement.

The action plan required a great deal of preparation prior to implementation. Over the summer, the materials for the take-home book bags, classroom library, the birthday books and tapes, 'read in your head' tubs and folders for the cross-age reading program were prepared. This preplanning and preparation allowed for ease in using the activities with the students.

Based on the experiences with the targeted students, the following recommendations would be offered for replicating the action plan.

When selecting the books for the take-home book bags, choose a variety of quality literature from well-known authors. After the students return the take-home book bags compile the activity sheets in bound form so that all ideas may be shared with the class. The completed tasks would therefore be more meaningful. Using activities that are relatively easy and open for creativity allows for positive feelings of accomplishing the tasks. When the bags are returned, check for the book and replace evaluation and activity form prior to sending the bags home again with the next student. It is important to have at least one replacement copy of each book in case of a lost or damaged book.

The students can help organize and label the books in the classroom library at the beginning of the school year. This will enable students to have earlier access to the books. The

students will also take more pride in the library and help maintain the appearance.

The cross-age reading program can be successful if the fourth graders are trained in their role in the program. As to changing cross-age reading buddies in the middle of the year, both positive and negative outcomes can be noted. Changing reading partners is a positive influence when the partners are not working cooperatively. Therefore, it is suggested that an interest survey be administered mid-year to evaluate the compatibility of reading partners. If problems are evident, a change in partners may be warranted for the success of the cross-age reading program.

The activities in the reading buddy folders for the first month were to encourage interaction between the reading buddies. Such activities included drawing themselves, their favorite foods, hobbies and future career choices. (Appendix R-S) During the remaining weeks of the intervention period, the activities concerned the book read. Activities such as the characters in the story, a new ending for the story and their favorite part of the story were completed. (Appendix T-U) These activities were also bound, and shared with both age groups so that various creative ideas could be shared.

To ensure success during the "read in your head' time, it is important to supply at least five books per child in the group. The children gain valuable insights into books during the five minute sharing time. Therefore, this activity should not be overlooked.

The limited increase in the enjoyment of looking at books shown in the earlier data, may possibly be due to the fact that the targeted students have five mandated reading books to complete in a year. Therefore by January, the students are beginning to show frustration and a dislike for reading. This is a difficult obstacle to overcome.

All the components of the action plan will be continued for the remainder of the school year with the targeted students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Student Survey

1. Do you have a library card?

_____ yes _____ no

---

2. Do you ever get books as gifts?

_____ yes _____ no

---

3. Do you have a bookshelf in your bedroom?

_____ yes _____ no

---

4. Do you ever read/share a book with someone else?

_____ yes _____ no

---

5. I like to look at books.

---

6. I think reading is easy.

50

Appendix B
Observation Form

Given 20 minutes of free time, the children will select a center to work at and stay in until time is called.

Date given:_____

	Name	Puzzles	Books	Paper/Crayon	Legos
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
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26					
27					
28					

Appendix C
Parent Survey

As part of my graduate work at St. Xavier University, I am working on a program to increase your child's motivation to read. It is not my intention to judge anyone. I am only interested in instilling in your child a desire to read. This is completely anonymous and your participation is totally voluntary. If interested in helping, please fill out and return this survey. Thank you for your interest.

1. Number of children in the family _____

2. Do you read aloud to your child _____ yes _____ no
   If yes, how often:

   _____ 1-2 times a week

   _____ 3-5 times a week

   _____ 6 or more times a week

3. Check below any of the listed reading material you have in your home.

   _____ newspapers _____ magazines

   _____ books

4. Check which of the following you have in your household

   _____ television _____ Nintendo

   _____ VCR _____ telephone

   _____ stereo _____ computer

5. If you read to your child, you read:

   _____ at the kitchen table _____ in their bedroom

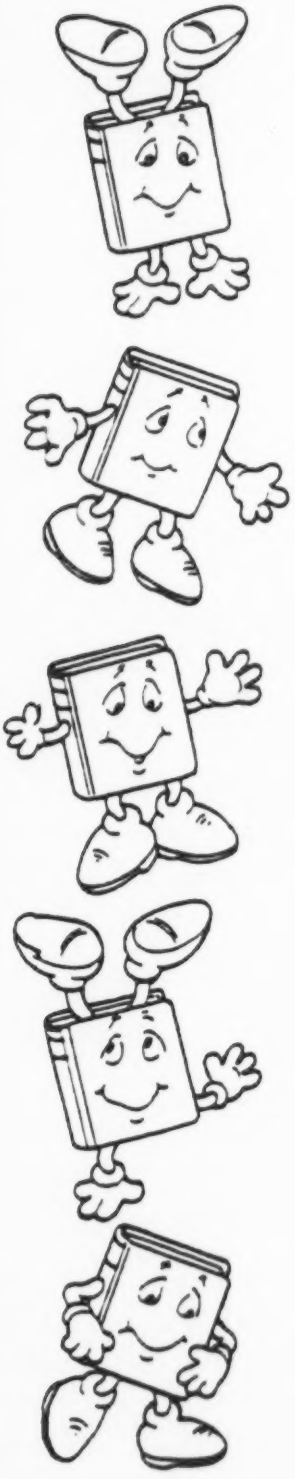
   _____ in the living room _____ other

6. How many children's books are in your home?

   _____ less than 10 books

   _____ 10-20 books

   _____ more than 20 books



Appendix D
Reading Buddy Guide Questions

1. Where does the story take place?
2. Who is your favorite character?
3. Which picture in the book do you like best? Why?
4. Stopping at a certain page, what do you think will happen next?
5. Which part of the story do you like best?
6. What happened first, next or last?
7. How do you feel about the end of the story?
8. Did you like this story? Why or why not?
9. Is the story real or make-believe?
10. What do you remember most about the story?
11. Think of a question to ask me about the book.
12. Be creative----these questions are only a guide. Make up any questions you think of about the story.

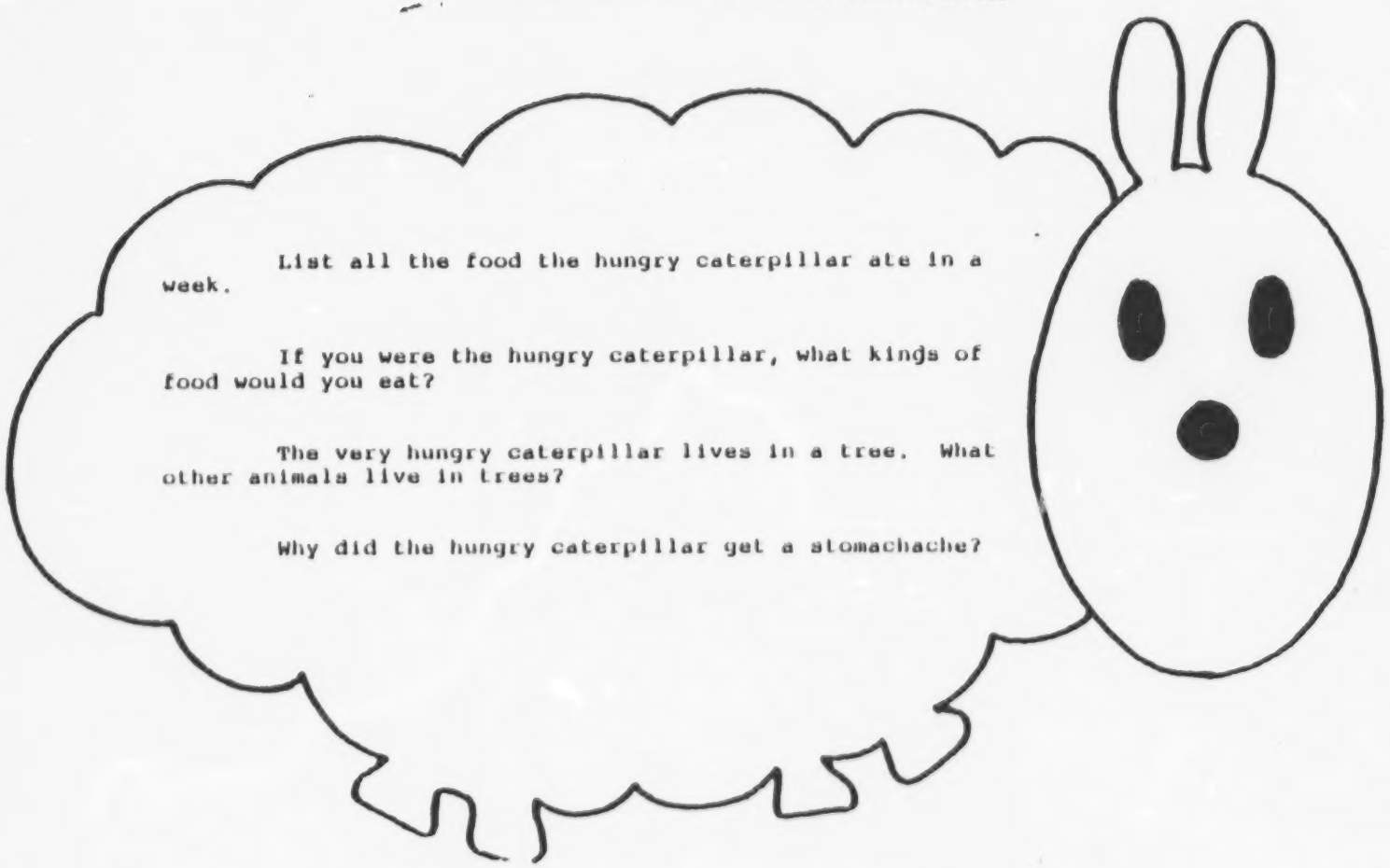
HAPPY READING!!!! ENJOY THE STORY!!!!

Appendix E
Reading Record Form

Cross-Age Reading Chart

Date	Reader	Title of Book	Reaction

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR



List all the food the hungry caterpillar ate in a week.

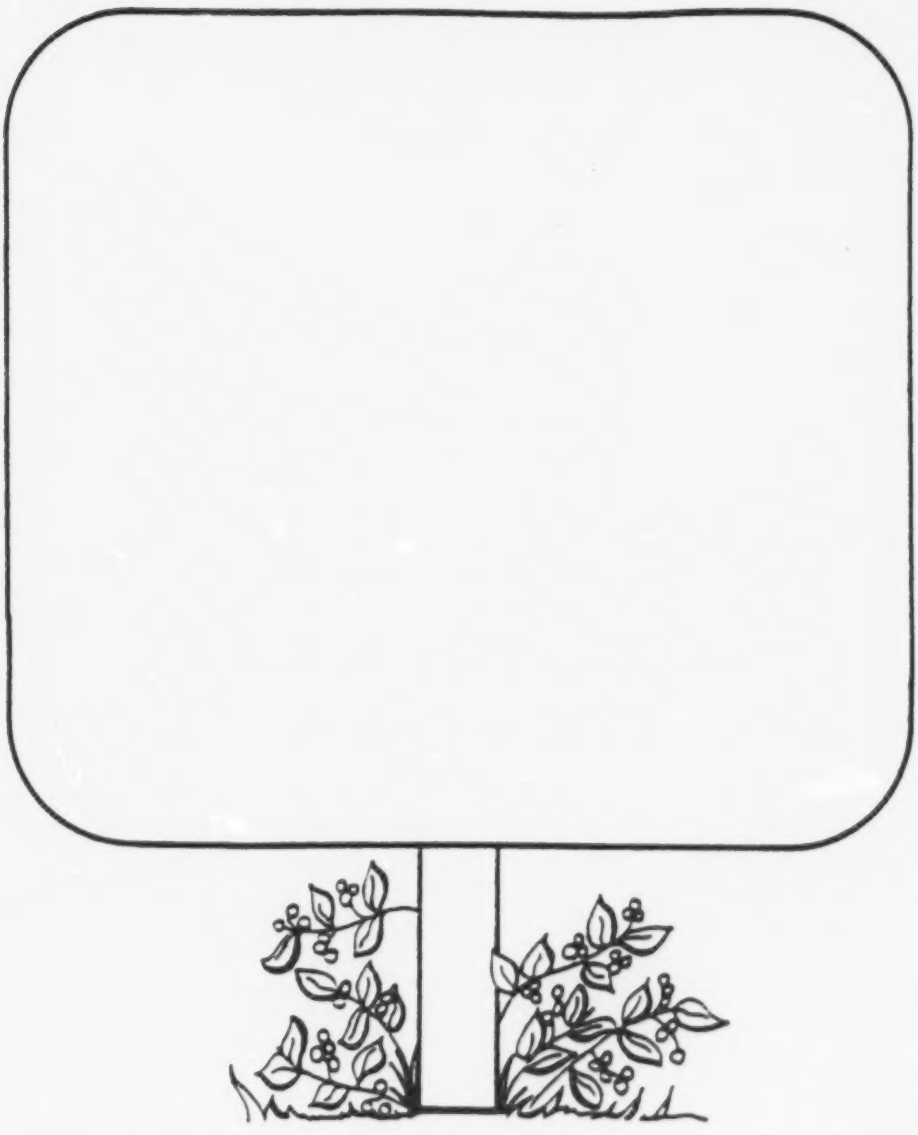
If you were the hungry caterpillar, what kinds of food would you eat?

The very hungry caterpillar lives in a tree. What other animals live in trees?

Why did the hungry caterpillar get a stomachache?

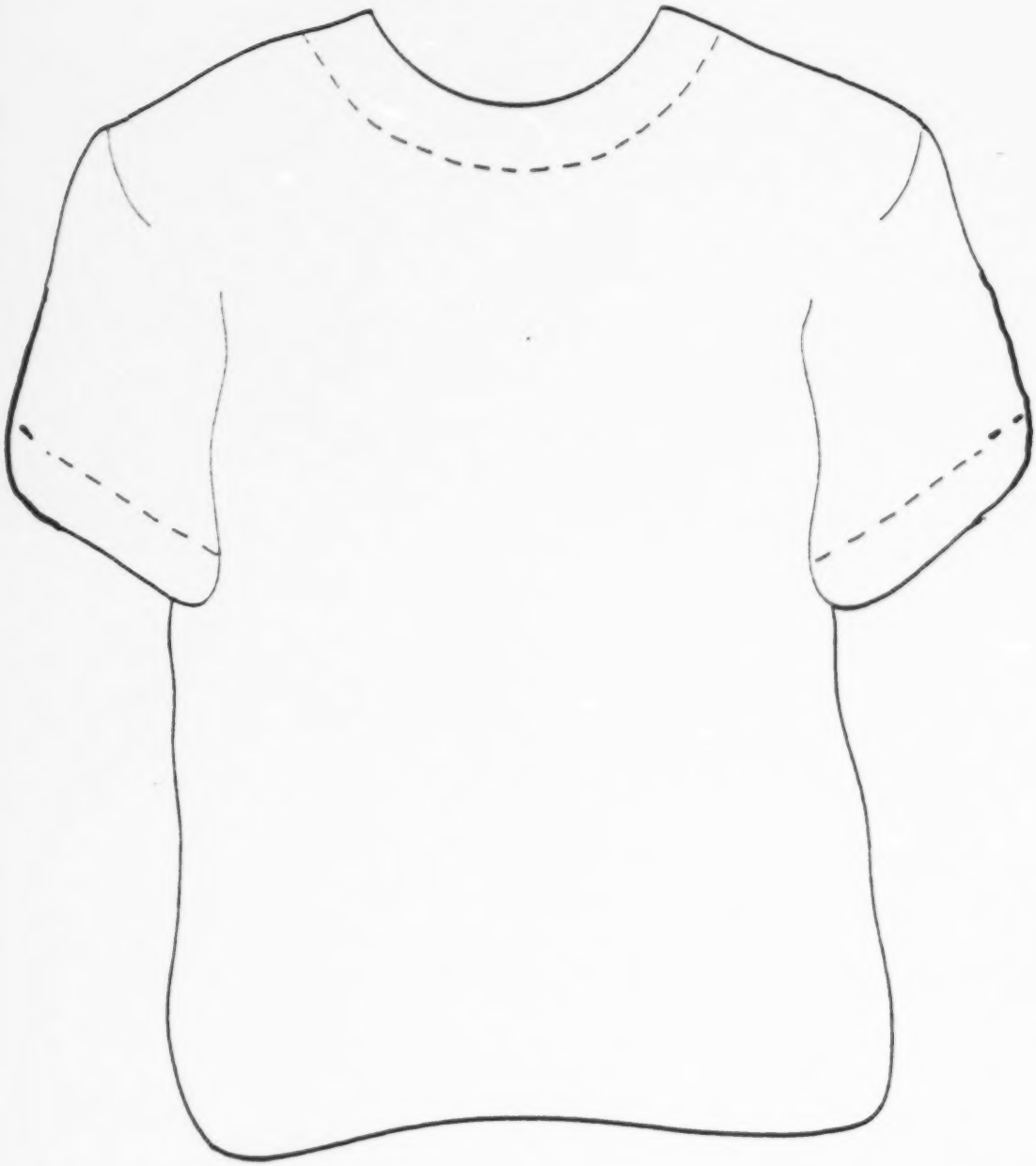
Appendix G
Sample Extension Activity

Make a sign to place at the bottom of Blueberry Hill.
Use mostly *B* words on your sign.



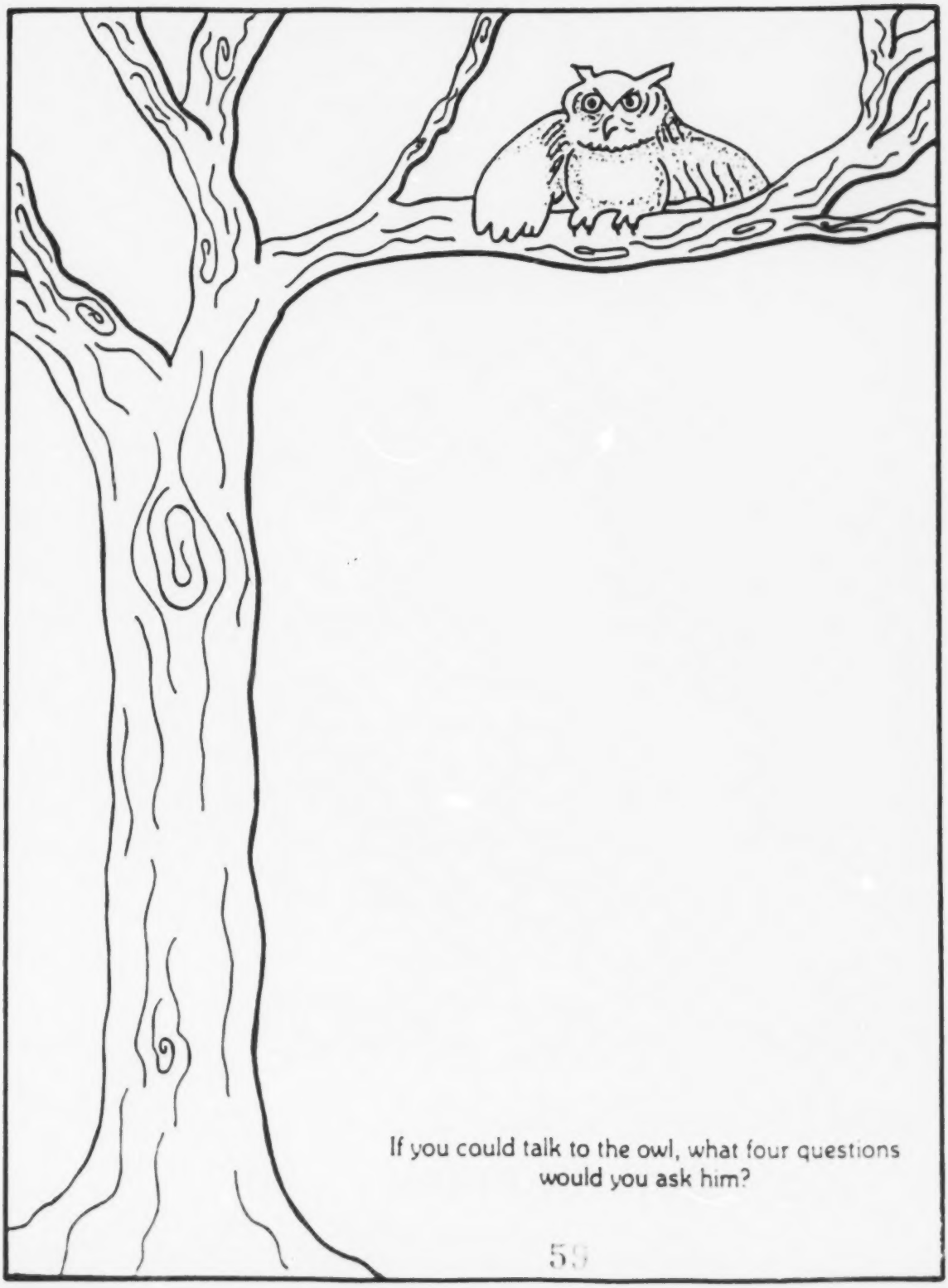
Appendix H
Sample Extension Activity

Create a T-shirt with a dinosaur design.



Appendix I

Sample Extension Activity



If you could talk to the owl, what four questions would you ask him?

Appendix J

Directions

1. Read the book to your child.

2. Discuss the book either by using the questions on the next page or by asking your own.

3. Complete the activity provided and place it back in the pocket folder.

4. Complete the evaluation form provided and place it back in the pocket folder.

5. Place folder and book back in the bag.

6. Return the bag and contents on Thursday.

Appendix K

Book Evaluation

1. Did your child enjoy this book?

   Yes No

2. We have read this book before.

   Yes No

3. Did your child ask you to read it again?

   Yes No

4. My child found the book activity...

   difficult just right easy

5. My child enjoyed..._____

   _____

   _____

Appendix L

Book Bag Checklist

Book Bag Numbers										
Pupil Names										
1										
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3										
4										
5										
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Appendix M
Post Student Survey

1. I like library time.

---

2. I like to look at books.

---

3. I think reading is easy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix N
Birthday Survey

Birthday Survey

1. Did you like picking out a book?

Yes No

---

2. Did you like being the reader with the tape?

Yes No

---

3. Would you like to do it again?

Yes No

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Appendix O
Post Parent Survey

1. Did your child enjoy doing the book bags?

   Yes No

2. Did your child begin to look at books more?

   Yes No

3. Did your child ask for books from the book orders more often?

   Yes No

Suggestions/Comments:

Appendix P

Cross-Age Reading Survey

1. Did you like reading with your reading buddy?

YES **NO**

---

2. Did you like the drawing activity?

YES **NO**

---

3. Do you want to continue the program?

YES **NO**

Appendix Q
Reading Buddy Evaluation

Reading Buddy Evaluation

1. Do you enjoy reading with your reading buddy?

   Yes No Sometimes

2. Do you like the writing/drawing activities you did together?

   Yes No Sometimes

3. What do you like best about the reading buddy program?

   _____

   _____

4. What do you like least about the reading buddy program?

   _____

   _____

5. Would you like to continue being a reading buddy?

   Yes No Maybe

   Why? _____

   _____

Appendix R

Sample Reading Buddy Activity

This is me.

This is my new buddy_____.

Appendix S
Sample Reading Buddy Activity

These are our favorite foods.

Appendix T
Sample Reading Buddy Story Activity

Here are the characters in the story _____.

Appendix U
Sample Reading Buddy Story Activity

The Story_____

_____